

PASSAIC RIVER STUDY AREA
POTENTIALLY RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
SEPTEMBER 1993

SDMS Document



84882

NAME OF PRP:

Celanese Chemical Company

FACILITY ADDRESS:

354 Doremus Avenue
Newark, New Jersey

LOCATION:

River Mile: -0.2
Reference Map Number: 15

PROCESSES UTILIZED:

Manufacture and storage of formaldehyde and petrochemicals. Raw materials used include but are not limited to methanol.

DISCHARGE:

- 05/12/76 - 05/25/76 - During filling of a 840,000 gal. storage tank, approx. 70,000 gals. of methanol overflowed onto the ground. An estimated 25,000 gal. of the spilled methanol was recovered. Most of the remainder ran into Plum Creek. [PVSC Monthly Reports; May 1976]
- 08/16/87 - A fitting on a tank truck return line leaked, causing a discharge of formic acid onto the ground. In the process of cleaning the spill area, formic acid entered Plum Creek, a tributary of the Passaic River. [08/16/87 NJDEP Emergency Response Investigation Report.]

PROBABLE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES:

- Formaldehyde
- Formic Acid
- Methanol

RIVER SAMPLES: Sampling was not conducted for these indicator parameters at this location. Sediments in Sample 98, located across the Passaic River from this facility, contained concentrations of PAH's in exceedence of NOAA criteria.

848820001

CARMINE T. PERRAPATO
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COMMISSIONERS

PASSAIC VALLEY SEWERAGE COMMISSIONERS

600 WILSON AVENUE
NEWARK, N.J. 07105
(201) 344-1800



118 A
SEYMOUR A. LUBETKIN
CHIEF ENGINEER

CHARLES C. CARELLA
CHIEF COUNSEL

MRS. CHARLES T. SCHAEDEL
CLERK-TREASURER

JUL 6 1976

Passaic Valley Sewerage Commissioners
600 Wilson Avenue
Newark, New Jersey 07105

Re: Monthly Report
May 1976

Gentlemen:

The following is my report which covers the month of May 1976, and consists of three parts:

Part I: Special Reports

#1 - The Passaic River Page 1

#2 - Don't "Lynch" the
Wrong Man Page 4

Part II: Pollution violations that
were eliminated during the
month, together with a re-
port on how elimination
occurred Page 7

Part III: Pollution violations that
were still discharging at
the end of the month into
the streams under the juris-
diction of the Passaic Valley
Sewerage Commissioners, to-
gether with a report on what
is being done to abate such
pollution Page 13

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PART IIVIOLATIONS AND ELIMINATIONS

The Following are reports on pollutional discharges into the Passaic River and its tributaries within the PVSC jurisdiction (the watershed from the Great Falls in Paterson to the mouth of the river at Newark Bay), together with reports on how they were eliminated during May 1976, and the names of the River Inspectors assigned to investigate the pollution:

Violation and Elimination - Celanese Chemical Company,
354 Doremus Avenue, Newark, N.J.
May 12-25, 1976 (J. McLaughlin)

While making routine inspections along Doremus Avenue on May 13, 1976, Inspector McLaughlin was informed by Mr. Edward Gold, Celanese Chemical Company's Terminal Manager, that an overflow of methanol from one of their storage tanks occurred at about 5 p.m. on May 12, 1976. Mr. Gold reported that the tank (with a capacity of 840,000 gal.) had a residue of 7,000 gallons and was being filled from a tanker located at a pier on the Passaic River. The pumping procedure began about 6 a.m. on May 12 and should have taken about 10 to 12 hours. The tank on the ship was reported to contain only 750,000 gallons which would have easily fit into the storage tank. However, an investigation after the spill revealed that the tank actually contained about 900,000 gallons. The methanol was pumped into the storage which overflowed into a channel formed by a metal wall which encircled the tank. Then, as this safety channel filled up, methanol began to pour from a loose access manhole cover in the outer wall. The pumping was stopped and valves were set to redistribute the methanol as quickly as possible. Despite this corrective action, Mr. John Forstchen, Terminal Engineer, later reported to Mr. D'Ascensio and Inspector McLaughlin on May 13, about 70,000 gallons was spilled onto the ground. Approximately 25,000 gallons of the 70,000 gallons was pumped from the large puddles on the ground into tanks for recovery. Most of the remaining methanol ran into nearby Plum Creek and was washed down with hoses to reduce the fire hazard. Celanese notified EPA and the Coast Guard of the spill but PVSC was not contacted. Inspector McLaughlin took samples at two locations in Plum Creek. Both were polluting. Subsequent samples indicated a pollution still existed but was most likely not due to the methanol. Thus the violation caused by Celanese was eliminated as of May 25, while another, as yet unidentified, pollution is being investigated.

848820003

Remarks:

While making routine inspections of this area I was informed by Celanese Terminal Mgr. Edward Gold of an overflow of methanol from storage tank.

On Wednesday May 12, 1976 at about 5:00 PM. a ^{reported} leak was discovered by Celanese employee in methanol storage tank, however it turned out that the tank was being filled from the Tanker Marmouth a pier. The storage tank capacity is 840,000 gal and was down to 7,000 gal. The tanker was reported to have 750,000 gal aboard, but turned out to have 900,000 gal. The result was, storage tank overflowed into retaining wall which also overflowed from there into ground area and into Plum Creek.

Celanese officials notified U.S. Coast Guard who in turn contacted EPA. Mr. Gold was unaware to notify P.V.S.C. but will do so regarding any future contamination. This was the first major spillage of this magnitude in over 20 yrs.

I arrived at the scene 2:30 P.M., May ¹³~~12~~ and immediately call F. Wascenis, PVSC who arrived at 3:00 P.M. We inspected the tank farm area with Mr. John Forsthen, Term. Eng.

I met with Mr. Gold on Friday, May 14 and he anticipates recovery of about 20-25,000 gal. from the estimated loss of 70,000 gals. methanol.

Most of the product was washed down with hose into Plum Creek to avoid fire hazard or possible explosion.

Termination will likely be several days, however if it appears ^{most} all of the methanol that can be recovered has been done.

NOTE: Sketch attached.

John

Respectfully,

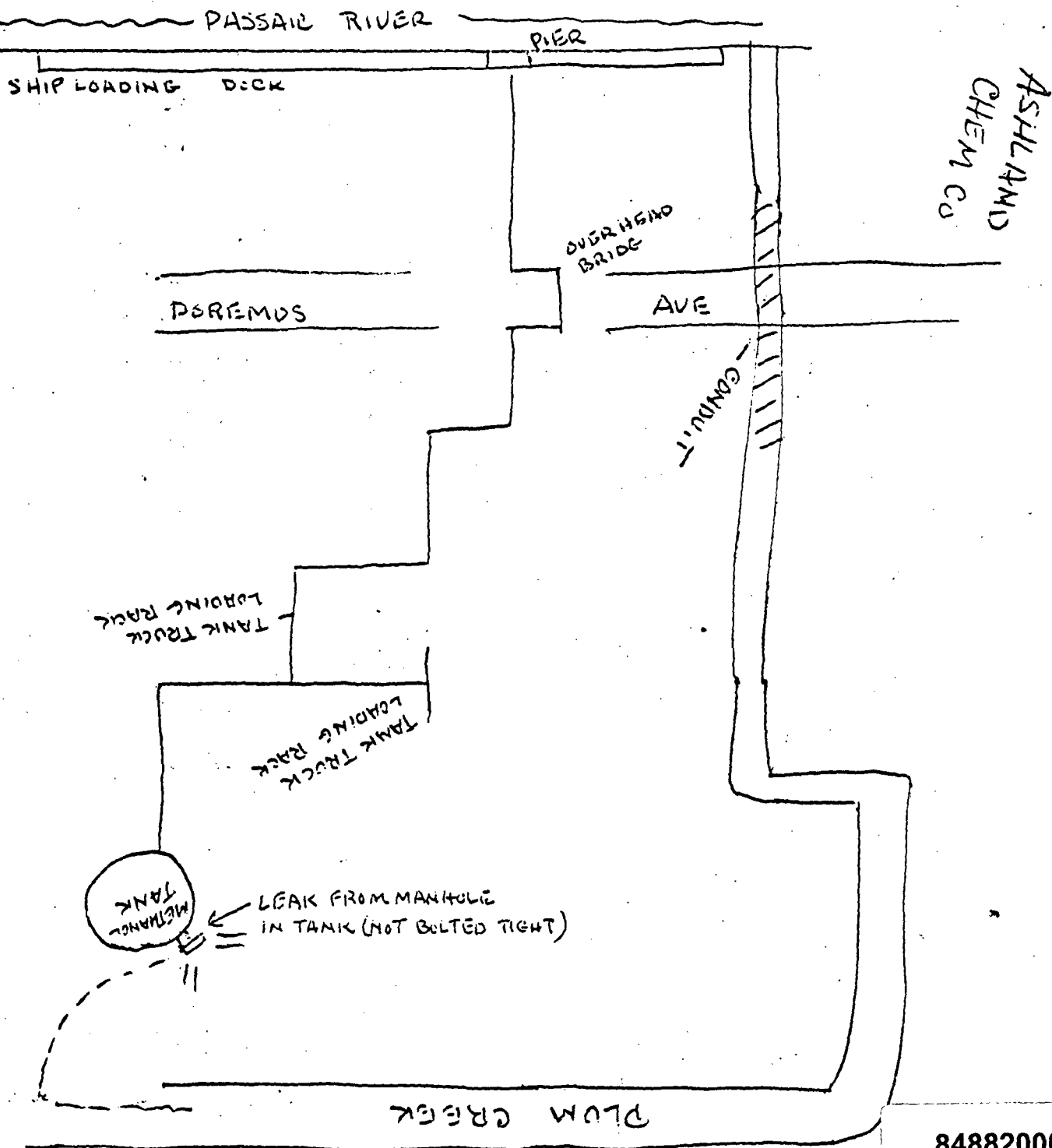
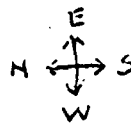
John R. McLaughlin

848820004

Nov-10

John R. McLaughlin
Inspector

Re: Celanese Chem. Co. 589-2705
354 Foreman Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105



848820005

Division of Environmental Quality
Bureau of Emergency Response

INVESTIGATION

Case #: 87-08-16-1102

File #: 07-14

Investigator: Alan Latyn Date: 8/16/87 Time Arrived: 1433 Time Departed: 1653

Location: Celanese Chemical Co. Property Owner: _____

Address: 354 Doremus Avenue Mailing Address: _____

Newark, NJ

Location Phone #: (201) 589-2705

Health Dept. Rep: _____ Phone #: _____

Origin of Complaint: Peter Aitoro Phone #: (201) 589-2705

Nature of Complaint: Notification was received from Peter Aitoro - Environmental & Safety Supervisor, that the Celanese Chemical Company had 150 gallons of formic acid spilled during a clean up operation.

Findings:

1433 Hrs: Latyn arrived on site. Met with Celanese representatives Adam Spencer - Operations Supervisor, and Peter Aitoro - Lab Safety & Health Supervisor. Aitore stated that formic acid was being used to clean out a piece of equipment called the "Special-K-Unit." The product was being pumped from a tank truck, through the unit, and then back again. A fitting on the tank truck return line leaked, allowing 150 gallons of formic acid to spill. The area was immediately hosed down, thus diluting the acid. In the process some of the diluted acid entered Plum Creek.

1455 Hrs: Spencer, Aitore, and Latyn inspect spill area. An area approximately 15 x 40 foot around the tank had been affected. There wasn't any acid remaining, only contaminated soil. Latyn took pH readings upstream, downstream, and at the point where the acid entered the stream. All readings came up between 5½ and 6½. The creek had already been through a whole tidal cycle. No dead fish were observed in the creek.

Aitore stated that representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard arrived at 1215 hours, and asked to be contacted after the clean up was completed.

848820006

INVESTIGATION

(2)

3 Hrs: Latyn updated Trenton Dispatch and Lester Jones.
5 Hrs: Latyn instructed Aitoro to call some contractors to do the clean up. Aitoro stated he would begin calling, but felt that none of the contractors would be able to respond until Monday morning.
545 Hrs: Latyn secured site.

Conclusions:

The Celanese Chemical Company had 150 gallons of formic acid spilled during a clean up operation. Most of the product remained on site, but some acid did enter Plum Creek. The spill did not appear to have any impact on the creek.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that this case be referred to Hazardous Waste Management Metro's office for further action.

Case No. 87-08-16-1102 ERI

Alan Latyn
Investigator/Author

8-18-87
Date

P. M. All
Supervisor

8/21/87
Date

848820007

81-08-17-0511

CASE NO. 87 - 08 - 16 - 1102
(Yr) (Mo) (Day) (Time)DATE 08 - 16 - 87
(Mo) (Day) (Yr)

REC'D BY

J. V. Marchetti
11:15
BER REGION I
(Office)

INCIDENT REPORT BY:

Name PETER AITROD Phone 201-589-2705
Street 354 DOUGLASS AVE
City NEWARK State _____
Affiliation/Title Celanese Chemical Co

INCIDENT LOCATION:

Name (Site): CELANESE CHEMICAL CO Phone 201-589-2705
Street 354 DOUGLASS AVE
City NEWARK County ESSEX State NJ Zip Code _____
Transportation ☐ Facility ☒ Other ☐Date of Incident: 08 - 16 - 87 Time: 08:30
(Mo) (Day) (Yr)

IDENTITY OF SUBSTANCE(S) SPILLED, RELEASED, ETC.:

Name of Substance(s) [Gas, Liquid, Solid]: FORMIC ACID Known ☐ Suspected ☐ Unknown ☐

CAS Number: _____

Amount Released/Spilled UNK Actual ☐ Potential ☐ Estimated ☐Substance Contained (Y/N/U) ☒Type of Release/Spill: ☒ Terminated ☐ Continuous ☐ IntermittentHazardous Material ☒

NATURE OF INCIDENT:

Complaint ☐ Munic. Notification ☒ Emergency ☐ Sub. 20 ☐

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION:

Fire ☐ Explosion ☐ Air Rel ☐ Spill ☒ MVA ☐ Derailment ☐ Smoke/Dust ☐
Odors ☐ Sewage ☐ NJPDES ☐ Noise ☐ Illegal Dumping ☐ Wildlife ☐
Equip Start-up/Shutdown, Equip Fail/Upset, etc. _____
Other (specify) _____Injuries (Y/N/U) ☒Facility Evacuation (Y/N/U) ☒Contamination of Air ☐ Land ☒ Water ☒Potable Water Source (Y/N/U) ☒Receiving Water PLUM CREEKLocation Type: Residential ☐ Industrial ☒ Rural ☐ Sensitive Population (Hosp., School, Nurs. Home) ☐Public Exposure (Y/N/U) ☒Police at Scene (Y/N/U) ☒Assistance Requested (Y/N/U) ☒

Wind Direction/Speed _____

Precipitation (rain/snow) _____

STATUS AT INCIDENT SCENE

CELANESE IS PERFORMING CLEAN UP AND
WILL PERFORM WATER TESTS

RESPONSIBLE PARTY:

Company Name CELANESE CHEMICAL CO Known ☒ Suspected ☐ Unknown ☐Contact PETER AITROD Phone 1-201-589-2705Street 354 DOUGLASS AVE Title SUPERVISOR - ENV'T SAFETYCity NEWARK County ESSEX State NJ Zip Code _____

OFFICIALS NOTIFIED (Name/Title):

NJSP: _____ / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)
Local Health _____ / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)
Local Munic: _____ / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)
USEPA: _____ / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)

INCIDENT REFERRED TO:

DEQ ☐ DWR ☐ DSWM ☐ DHSM ☐ DHWM ☐ DOH ☐ DFG ☐ DPF ☐ DCJ ☐ DCR ☐Region: Northern ☐ Metro ☐ Central ☐ Southern ☐ ER1 ☐ ER2 ☐1. Name/Affil LATYU / E.L. Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)
2. Name/Affil _____ / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)
3. Name/Affil _____ / _____ Phone _____ Date/Time _____ / _____ (T/M)

IMMEDIATE DEP RESPONSE (Y/N)

[Emergency (Y/N)]

Enforcement (Y/N)]

848820008

Affiliation/Title CHEMICAL COMPANY DELANESE - OPERATION SUPERVISOR State

INCIDENT LOCATION: Transportation ☒ Facility ☐ Other

Name (Site): 354 DOREMUS AVE Phone

Street NEWARK County ESSEX State NJ Zip Code

Date of Incident 10-06-87 Time: 0830-0845

IDENTITY OF SUBSTANCE(S) SPILLED, RELEASED, ETC.: ☒ Known ☐ Suspected ☐ Unknown

Name of Substance(s) (Liquid, Solid, Gas): VINYL ACETATE

CAS Number:

Amount Released/Spilled 15 gal ☐ Actual ☐ Potential ☒ Estimated

Substance Contained in (N/A)

Type of Release/Spill: ☐ Terminated ☐ Continuous ☐ Intermittent

Hazardous Material

NATURE OF INCIDENT: ☐ Complaint ☒ Munic. Notification ☐ Emergency ☐ Sub. 20

INCIDENT TYPE: ☐ Explosion ☐ Air Poll. ☒ Spill ☐ MVA ☐ Derailment ☐ Smoke/Dust

☐ Fire ☐ Release ☐ Noise ☐ Illegal Dumping ☐ Wildlife

☐ Faulty Equipment/Defective Equip. Failure/Inst. etc.

☐ Other (Specify)

Injuries (Y/N/A)

Facility Damage (Y/N/A)

Contamination of ☐ Air ☐ Land ☐ Water

Possible Source (Y/N/A)

Receiving Water

Location Type: ☐ Residential ☒ Industrial ☐ Other

STATUS AT INCIDENT SCENE CALLER STATED SPILL OCCURED BEACUSE OF A LEAKY VALVE. COMPANY

TOOK CARE OF CLEANUP

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: ☒ Known ☐ Suspected ☐ Unknown

Company Name DELANESE CHEMICAL COMPANY Phone 201-589-2075

Contact ADAM SPENCER Title OPERATION SUPERVISOR

Street 354 DOREMUS AVE

City NEWARK County ESSEX State NJ Zip Code

OFFICIALS NOTIFIED (Name/Title):

NJSP: JOANN / NJSP-OEM Phone 882-2000 Date/Time 10-06 / 1222 (T/M)

Local Health / Phone / Date/Time / (T/M)

Local Munic: / Phone / Date/Time / (T/M)

USEPA: / Phone / Date/Time / (T/M)

INCIDENT REFERRED TO:

☐ DEQ ☐ DWR ☐ PSWM ☐ DHSM ☒ DHWM ☐ DOH ☐ DFG ☐ DPF ☐ DCJ ☐ OCR

Region: ☐ Northern ☒ Metro ☐ Central ☐ Southern ☒ ER1 ☐ ER2

1. Name/Affil JOE HOYLE / ER1 Phone OFFICE Date/Time 10-06 / 1220 (T/M)

2. Name/Affil JOAN PIGGOT / DHWM-M Phone OFFICE Date/Time 10-06 / 1221 (T/M)

3. Name/Affil / Phone / Date/Time / (T/M)

IMMEDIATE DEP RESPONSE (Y/N) [Emergency (Y/N)] Enforcement (Y/N)

COMMENTS TELEFAX TO DHWM-M

12:27 COMPANY CALLED- STATED SPILL WAS REPORTED TO #201-669-3900 MRS. MANIS.

COPIES: White - Lead Agency Yellow - Comm. Center Pink - A310 Goldenrod - Other

1002 TRENTON DISPATCH 882-2000 87 10/06 13:23

848820009

FACT SHEET

for LANDFILLS to Discharge
Into the Ground Waters of the State

NAME AND ADDRESS OF APPLICANT:

Celanese Chemical Co., Inc.
354 Doremus Avenue
Newark, NJ 07105

NAME AND ADDRESS OF FACILITY WHERE DISCHARGE OCCURS:

Same as Applicant

RECEIVING WATER:

Ground waters of the state. The discharge is to the Brunswick Formation which is Triassic in age.

DESCRIPTION OF FACILITY:

Celanese Landfill is a closed, 4.3 acre site which accepted dry, non-hazardous, chemical waste (paraformaldehyde sludge) and bulky waste.

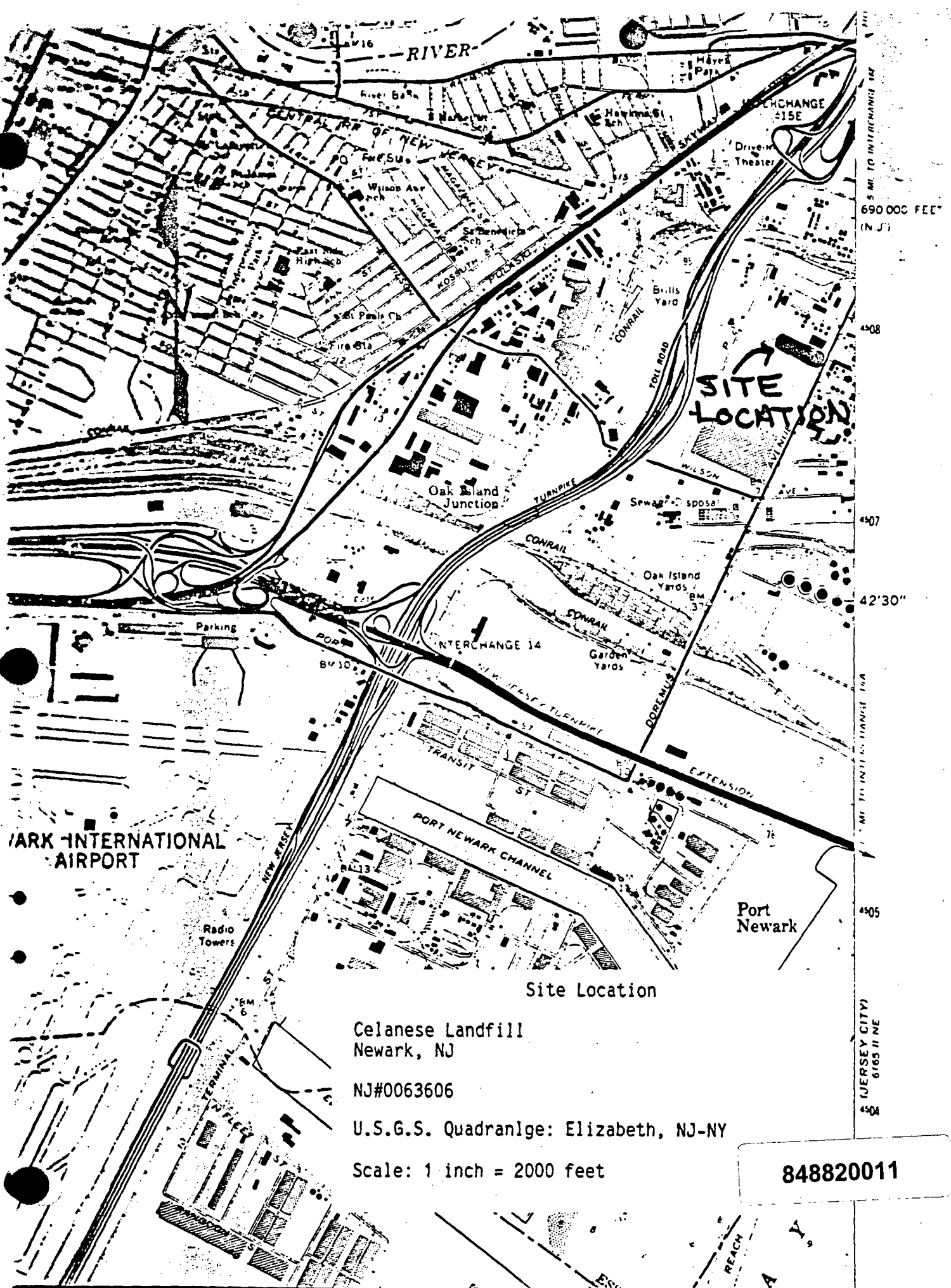
DESCRIPTION OF NJPDES GROUND WATER MONITORING PERMIT:

The discharge from the landfill is in the form of leachate. Four (4) ground water monitoring wells and three (3) stream locations will be tested on a periodic basis.

PERMIT CONDITIONS:

Issue an initial NJPDES permit with the attached general and special conditions.

848820010



Celanese Landfill
Newark, NJ

NJ#0063606

U.S.G.S. Quadrangle: Elizabeth, NJ-NY

Scale: 1 inch = 2000 feet

848820011